ONCE upon a mountain there was a man named John Muir. He lived on breadcrusts and tea, and he slept in a blanket beneath the shelter of stunted trees (*Pinus albicaulis*) at timberline. He became famous because he awakened the minds of many people to the need for preserving and protecting the wild meadows, flowers, forests, streams and lakes of the Sierra Nevada and other wildernesses.

But, incredibly, Muir's crusade to save the wilderness gave birth to an organization that became a replica of Big Business. Other groups followed suit. The metamorphosis was an evolutionary process; success attracts money, money employs people, and then the payroll must be met, and, above all, the organization must grow. With fascination, I have watched the change in John Muir's legacy—the Sierra Club. He used to hike with the Club on their annual summer outing to the mountains that started in 1901 and has continued through the years.

For the first fifty years, the outings were on a modest scale. In 1957, the cost of the 28 scheduled trips totalled \$1,571, an average of \$4 per person per day; and obviously cheaper than staying at home. Then came the boom. In 1972, there were 208 trips, and some cost as much as \$1,725 each for five weeks, not including jet plane fares. Apparently the Sierra Club has not reached its Limits to Growth.

With growth comes financial responsibility. Those who are engaged in saving the world need money, but they are too busy with important matters to concern themselves with investment.

Professional counsellors handle such nagging details. Fortunately, there is a Freedom of Information act that allows such matters to be uncovered. The National Audubon Society, once a birdwatchers' club, has a handsome and diverse portfolio of securities including

Eco-business

THOMAS H. JUKES

Strathmore Paper Co., Inland Steel, General Electric, Atlantic Richfield Oil, Walt Disney Productions, Texaco, and Columbia Gas. Moreover, Audubon, the rescuer of birds from slicks and spillage made by the polluting oil companies, has a nice gas and oil business in its Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary in Louisiana which brings in \$300,000 annually.

Great huffing and puffing followed these disclosures. The President of Audubon, who used to be Secretary of the Army, said that the Society needed experience in actually producing gas and oil. A police court magistrate, I suppose, should commit a few burglaries to get the feel of the thing. The Sierra Club Foundation is long on Exxon, General Motors, Tenneco, Public Service of Colorado (nuclear reactors), strip-mining firms and pulp-mill companies. The Environmental Defence Fund defended its fiscal environment in 1973 by cashing dividend cheques from Mallinckrodt Chemical, Avon Products, Exxon, and Philip Morris.

Some security analysts say that the relationship of conservationists to petroleum companies is symbiotic, citing the case of the Alaskan Pipeline. The construction of this was delayed because of a campaign, spearheaded by the Sierra Club, after a large stock of steel pipe had been purchased in Japan and delivered to the frozen tundra before the current inflation. The price of crude oil zoomed up during the delay, and now the oil companies are using the low-cost pipe, which will transport oil whose net worth multiplied *in situ* while conservationists fought valiantly on behalf of the caribou . . .

I am told that caribous have developed a habit of sleeping on the wooden drilling platforms in Alaska, apparently to ward off the chill of the permafrost. Oh, well!—John Muir rolled himself in a blanket. May as well keep warm! □

international news

To help avert "mass hunger for future decades", there should be an immediate, massive infusion of funds into research on food production and a major overhaul of the agricultural research system in the United States, according to two reports submitted last week to President Ford by the National Academy of Sciences. The reports outline preliminary findings of a two-year study, due to be completed in June 1977, of how research in the United States can help combat the grim prospect of increasing hunger and starvation throughout the world.

Specifically requested by President Ford in response to the World Food Conference, which was convened in Rome a year ago, the reports are surprisingly critical of agricultural re-

A thought for food

by Colin Norman, Washington

search policies in the United States. Although there have been spectacular increases in domestic agricultural production during the past three or four decades—to the point, in fact, where North America is now virtually the world's breadbasket—the reports suggest that research efforts lack central coordination, receive insufficient funds, and pay too little attention to basic studies. The preliminary reports, which are designed to influence the Ford Administration's budget for next year

(which is now being prepared), thus offer a prescription for improving the research system, and suggest a number of specific projects requiring an immediate injection of funds.

One of the reports, prepared by a committee headed by Dr Harrison Brown of California Institute of Technology (*World Food and Nutrition Study: interim report*) presents an overall view of how agricultural research in the United States can assist in coping with the world food problem. It draws heavily on the findings and recommendations of the second report, concerned mostly with domestic agricultural research policy (*World Food and Nutrition Study: Enhancement of Food Production in the United States*), which was prepared by a committee